

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

July 24, 2003

** Clause L.10 of the RFP allows offeror(s) 20 days from the issuance date to submit questions regarding the solicitation. The following is a compilation of the inquiries and questions that were frequently received. Technical questions received after July 21, 2003 will not be responded to.*

1. Q: Is there currently an incumbent on this project? If so, are they a graduating 8(a) firm?

A: The same or similar services are currently being performed under EPA contract # 68-W-01-033. The incumbent under that contract, SPS Technologies, Inc., is a non-graduating 8(a) firm.

2. Q: Is a bidder's list (or solicitation mailing list) publicly available for this RFP?

A: In accordance with FAR 14.205—"Solicitation mailing lists", all eligible and qualified concerns must submit applications (using Standard Form 129) for placement on a solicitation mailing list. As of July 21, 2003, no such applications have been received, therefore a solicitation mailing list has not been established. Additionally, the Government has used electronic commerce methods to transmit the solicitation and/or notice of procurement opportunities to all sources who've expressed interest. This was conducted via public notice and synopsis to EPA's Acquisition Forecast Database and the Federal Business Opportunities web site, in addition to the Request for Proposal (RFP), which is posted to EPA's contracts website under the following link:

http://www.epa.gov/oamhpod1/oppts_grp/0311297/index.htm.

In situations where mailing lists have already been established, this information can generally be obtained following a written request made in accordance with EPA regulations implementing FAR 24.2—Freedom of Information Act.

3. Q: How can one seek potential sub-contracting opportunities for this procurement?

A: In researching potential sub-contracting opportunities, there are a couple of approaches that may be of benefit. First, potential contractors and/or subcontractors may be permitted to transmit a notice to the Federal Business Opportunities website (i.e., the single government point-of-entry (GPE) for Federal government procurement opportunities), or to the Small Business Administration's Sub-Net. The requirements for doing so are addressed in FAR 5.206—"Notices of subcontracting opportunities." Furthermore, lists of vendors who are likely to bid on this type of procurement can be searched by NAICS classification on SBA's Pro-Net Website. The applicable NAICS Code for this procurement is 541519. This is generally the best approach to reach companies interested in this procurement and/or related subcontracting opportunities.

*Note: The Government intends to award this contract to a single firm. In the event that sub-contractors are utilized, all regulations stipulated in both in the synopsis and RFP shall apply.

4. Q: Regarding Past Performance Questionnaires: Should the offerors' clients send the past performance questionnaires directly to EPA—or should clients return the questionnaire(s) to the offeror for inclusion with the submitted proposal?

A: Either approach is acceptable, however, it is usually in the best interest for offeror(s) to include this documentation with their submitted proposals. This will ensure offeror(s) that their past performance information will be received on time and properly reviewed.

5. Q: Is it mandatory that potential contractors have an office in the Washington D.C. area, or on the east coast for performance of this contract?

A: The National Program Chemicals Division (NPCD) has determined that it is not mandatory for a company to have an office in Washington, D.C., provided the contractor has the resources, facilities, etc. to perform the task areas in the Statement of Work.

6. Q: How many labor hours/year are estimated in support of this contract?

A: This information is provided in the RFP, however the following is a summary of labor hour estimations pertaining to this procurement. Attachment III (pages 3-7 and 3-8) of the RFP, indicates a total potential of 63,750 hours (or 12,750 per year), and is congruent with the divisions shown in Clauses H.6, and H.7. These clauses specify the use of both *optional periods* and *optional quantities* of hours within each period. Clause B.3, however, only specifies a ceiling for the *base quantity* of hours that the government has estimated will be used. For example, in the Base Period, up to 5,100 hours could be ordered by the government if needed. Likewise, if additional work became necessary that exceeds the 5,100 hour ceiling, then the contract allows for the use of up to 7,650 hours additionally in each period. Otherwise, a new contract would need to be established. This is reflected below:

Period	Base Qty Ceiling (hours)	Opt. Qty Ceiling (hours)	Totals
Base Period	5,100	7,650	12,750
Option Period I	5,100	7,650	12,750
Option Period II	5,100	7,650	12,750
Option Period III	5,100	7,650	12,750
Option Period IV	5,100	7,650	12,750
Totals	25,500	38,250	63,750

These figures apply to the Level of Effort (LOE) portion of the contract only. The remaining 15% of estimated work under this contract involves the Indefinite-Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) portion found in Clause B.5 of the RFP.

7. Q: For the Indefinite-Delivery, Indefinite-Quantity (IDIQ) portion of the contract, found under Clause B.5 of the RFP, there are minimum and maximum quantities (pages) given. Should offeror(s) assume an average number for developing their price?

A: “IDIQ” and “Requirements” contract methods are applicable when the Government cannot predetermine the precise quantities of supplies or services that will be required during the contract period, and when a recurring need is expected. The quantity range (in pages) has been provided in Clause B.5 as a general estimation for offeror(s) to establish their proposed prices. That being said, offeror(s) are autonomous in choosing any method or rationale for establishing competitive prices for this portion of the contract.

8. Q: Typically in the past what foreign languages translation was required?

A: Based on EPA contract # 68-W-01-033, Spanish language translation services comprised the majority of work assignments issued under this task. However, other language translations may be required where the need dictates.

9. Q: Under Attachment 4–“Award Evaluation Criteria”of the RFP, a total of 11 key personnel are identified. However, a total estimation of 12,750 labor hours/year translates to less than seven (7) full-time equivalents. For the anticipated number of hours, very minimal efforts are required from secondary task leaders—is this still considered a key position?

A: Based on this question, it appears that “full-time” equivalents are being calculated on the basis of 40-hour accounting (assuming a 40-hour workweek for 52 weeks). This would be erroneous, as estimations are expressed in the RFP in terms of “direct-labor-hours”—that is, labor that is physically traceable to the finished good or service. Also, this is immaterial to the evaluation criteria stated in Attachment 4, which provides factors for the technical evaluation of the proposal, as opposed to analyzing proposed prices and labor rates. Therefore, all key personnel identified in the RFP are consequential to the Government’s assessment of the proposal and the offeror’s ability to perform the prospective contract successfully.

10. Q: Task 1.1 of the Statement of Work indicates that the contractor shall create and maintain an electronic database which will include information provided to them by EPA. Is there a preference for database tool?

A: Although there is no preference for specific database tools or software applications, consideration should be given to typical factors, such as: technical features, benefits, compatibility, operation, maintenance, etc., of the information system (database). The links below provides samples and significant information relating to databases being utilized by the EPA, and a webguide for the Agency.

<http://www.epa.gov/epahome/Data.html>

<http://www.epa.gov/webguide/>

11. Q: Regarding Section 1.0 of the SOW, on p. 2-5, could you please provide a “ballpark” estimate of the expected volume of storage at EPA, and the expected volume of storage off-

site.

A: The volume of storage at EPA is not relevant to respond to this RFP; however, EPA expects that the contractor should have space to store between 2,500 - 3,500 boxes at any given time.

12. Q: Section 1.1 of the SOW, on p. 2-5, states that the contractor shall receive, track, organize and store large volumes of information. Does EPA have any “ballpark” figures for the quantity of documents received?

A: The volume of documents received typically depends on when an item becomes popular and when the contractor is low on that item. EPA will normally send to the contractor an average of 3 - 5 boxes of 1 - 2 document types per month.

13. Q: Section 1.1 of the SOW, on p. 2-5, states that the contractor shall create specialized means which support State, Regional, and public outreach and media campaigns. Could you please provide some examples of the types of specialized means you have in mind?

A: Some specialized means usually comes in the form of posters, pamphlets, outreach slogans, etc.

14. Q: Section 3.1 of the SOW, on p. 2-7, states that the contractor shall provide training and user support. Could you please provide an example of a representative type of training? For example, does EPA envision in-person group training, or training delivered via a website Powerpoint presentation and conference call, or some other type of training? For user support, does EPA envision a telephone help line, or some other type of user support?

A: EPA expects training shall come in a number of different variations. Whether it may be in the form of the contractor having to do formal in-person training or written training. User support training usually is necessary if the contractor creates a software program and is required to train someone else how to use it.

15. Q: Regarding section 3.1 of the SOW, on p. 2-7, approximately how many calls come into the hotline each week or each month?

A: The number of calls coming into the hotline is not relevant to respond to this RFP; however, the contractor typically has to send out approximately between 45,000 - 55,000 documents per month.

16. Q: Regarding Section 3.3 of the SOW, on p. 2-8, approximately how many contacts are in the contacts database?

A: There are approximately 250 contacts in the contacts database at this time.

17. Q: Section 3.5 of the SOW, on p. 2-9, states that the contractor shall design and conduct

interactive information displays. Could you please describe an example of such a display, and in particular, an example of the interactive element? For example, is EPA considering a booth of the kind used in exhibit halls? Would the interactive element be, for example, a PC-based educational quiz?

A: That is precise.

18. Q: Section 3.6 of the SOW, on p. 2-9, specifies as deliverables audio/video tape and CD-ROMS. Could you please elaborate on the nature of the audio/video tapes? For example, will EPA want professionally produced public service announcements for broadcast on national television networks?

A: These audio/video tapes will not be used for public service announcements, rather used in classes, training sessions, etc. when needed.

19. Q: Regarding SOW area 5.1, will EPA accept a cost proposal that proposes one cost per page for writing documents "from scratch" and a lower cost per page for updating existing documents?

A: This is correct.